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State of Louisiana
Governor's Office of Homeland Security
and
Emergency Preparedness

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PRESS RELEASE

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GOHSEP SECURES FUNDING FOR DOPPLER RADAR SYSTEM AT ULM

Baton Rouge, LA (March 22, 2012) – Today, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) announced a $3 million dollar investment in hazard mitigation grant funding for a Doppler radar system and 48KW generator for backup power. The Doppler radar system and generator will be located at the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM).

"This was an opportunity to develop a great partnership with ULM. Not only will this be an educational tool for the university, but from a safety standpoint it will help the region better predict storms and other hazardous weather," said GOHSEP Director Kevin Davis. The northern part of the state is just as vulnerable to severe weather as any other part of Louisiana whether it's tornadoes, hail or flash flooding. These types of events can cause major damage and result in the loss of life," Davis added.

The area that will benefit from the Doppler system includes: Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union and West Carroll Parishes. One local emergency management official says the intent is to improve emergency preparedness for Northeast Louisiana. "This is a great tool for the region. Radar systems in Shreveport, La. and Jackson, Miss. cover the area but leave a void in the atmosphere. Therefore, some of the radar does not cover the region as well as it could," said Ouachita Office of Emergency Preparedness Director Tracy Hilburn. "The system will be tied in with the National Weather Service (NWS) and we will have constant live weather feeds in our emergency operations centers."

National Weather Service's Warning Coordination Meteorologist Keith Stellman added, " We've been working with GOHSEP and ULM on this project by providing information needed to move forward. This is beneficial to the state because it will help with rain estimates in North Louisiana and it will provide an additional radar source to help detect severe weather."

University officials say the system will enhance the education received by ULM students

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pursuing their BS in Atmospheric Sciences. “ULM’s atmospheric sciences program will provide crucial weather data to the State of Louisiana,” said ULM President Nick Bruno.“One-third of National Weather Service forecasters in Louisiana are graduates of ULM's atmospheric sciences program. We are so proud to continue that great tradition of excellence with this new technology."

“We’re very excited about this opportunity. As the only institution in the state that trains professional meteorologists, it will not only enhance the education of ULM students, but it will help GOHSEP and the NWS serve the community and achieve their missions to assist the parishes,” said Dr. Eric Pani, Interim Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

Assistant Professor of Atmospheric Sciences Dr. Larry Hopper said, “Students will have the opportunity to observe and analyze tropical cyclones in late summer to severe local storms during any time of year that can produce flash floods and wind damage.”

ULM’s Dr. Anne Case Hanks added, “This will be a great experience for the atmospheric science majors while providing a service to the state and region.”

University officials expect the system to be in place by the end of the year.

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